From: Brian Fahrlander
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 6:44am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

There's so much wrong with the settlement I don't know where to begin.

The typical Microsoft business style is based on lies, leveraging their stance against anyone who might make "too much" of a dent in their empire. Case in point: Blue Mountain Greeting Cards, Netscape, and Spyglass software.

And even when there's nothing illegal or unethical involved, they still don't 'get it right', and that's intentional. Case in point:

TCP/IP is a standard that's been around for decades. There's an RFC on how to do it so that your machines/programs are compatible and everything works. Microsoft coded up (or perhaps stole) a TCP/IP "stack" that works in every way but one, as far as I know:

When another host "pings" a Microsoft machine by expicit IP address, it answers. (If it didn't, it would be almost useless). When someone sends a "broadcast ping" (which all hosts on a subnet are supposed to answer) it does NOT answer the ping. A little odd, but we can live with it.

If the subnet's giving out IP addresses that can change, called "DHCP", all hosts are supposed to talk for the duration of their "lease" on that address. When the lease expires, and the Microsoft box is supposed to shut up, it still answers. Any machine probing the old address to ensure it doesn't hand out an address that's actually in use (causing nasty problems for the net) will get a response from the Microsoft box, and the old address is marked as "in use". Soon, all the addresses available will be marked 'in use' and the entire network crashes.

Now why would they do this? They want to sell NT for servers. This is key:

"The old, open, Unix/Linux machines don't support Microsoft. And it's ALL the Microsoft machines, so it's not their fault; your Unix servers can't handle these new machines."

Then, instead of paying nothing, the management buys two (not one) NT machines, bringing even more non-standard features that require more payments to Microsoft. It requires two machines, costing about $4,000 total because NT isn't stable enough to be counted on 24/7.

This is just one of the hundreds of crooked deals and te way they do business.

But you KNOW all of this. What you fear about Microsoft is what it will do to millions of computer users. Fear not: no one gets any real tech support from Microsoft. They do it all in-house and through the net. Home users SHOULD be going to their local reseller anyway. It's time to put some profitability back in it for the little guys. As much as I'd like to setup a computer store, there's no way- there's almost no profit in it at all.

I've been in computers since CP/M was still going strong, about 1978. When Microsoft began to grow it was fun- every day a new thing, tricks to learn and things got done. Now, it's only about money and the *perception* of value. There are still viruses, even after 18 years of development, and they're making new security holes...by policy...every day.

It's got to stop. It has, for me. I sworn off Microsoft one day in 1993 and never went back. But it's still the prevailing monopoly and it's no longer funtional. Point out *real* differences and new features about Word95 that differ from those in Word2k or WordXP. There aren't any. But they keep changing the file format so you'll have to buy the new version just the same.

They're holding back technology; it's time to put Word to bed and put those developers on new projects, but they won't. And while Word remains the (undocumented) standard file format for business, other folks who WILL go where the features are can't get a foothold.

The time for the monopoly is over; let someone who has the true needs of the PEOPLE in mind, not the ever-staggering cash crop. Doesn't it bother you that Microsoft now has enough money that they could literally buy their own "Seventh Fleet"? Just what do you suppose they'll do with that much money? They sure aren't paying programmers to add features or remove viruses.

...and people think they're stable enough to hold private, confidential information like credit cards in .NET?

It's time. You're bigger than Microsoft, and now you're the only one.

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Virus-hackers are open-source; they harness the power of millions of to
crack OSes. Their power is legendary. Ask anyone running Microsoft.

Doesn't it just make sense to battle that with millions of contributors
to combat these problems? That's what Linux and *BSD are all about.